

# The Hawaiian Star,

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FRANK L. HOOQS.....MANAGER

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## Hope For Reform In Russia

It seems now that the cable announcement that the Czar had told the zemstvos that their agitation was useless, was misleading in so far as the deduction was drawn from it that there was to be no reform at all. Later cables indicate that the powers of the Zemstvo are to be increased as well as those of the Land Councils. What would seem to be the proper inferences from the cables so far received are that the agitation for a representative gathering from all over the empire with legislative powers will be useless, but that the people are to be given some sort of a gathering through which they can make their wants known.

The Zemstvo which is really a gathering of landed proprietors, was established by Alexander II, who freed the serfs, and was intended by him as a means by which the needs of the rural population could be brought to the attention of the government. The reactionary spirit which made headway under Alexander's successors, seems to have made nugatory the original hope that animated its creation. However, it seems only hope deferred, because when the time came, and opportunity was ripe, Prince Mirsky found the Zemstvo actually in existence, even if they had not been of any real usefulness so far as reform and representative government went, and ready, it is to be hoped, to become now, the real instrument of reform.

Perhaps Russia is not yet ready for such sweeping reforms as the Zemstvo proposed. Perhaps real progress will be made fastest by going slowly. Possibly the Czar is the great statesman it has been claimed he is, and not the mere bigoted, morbidly religious weakling which it has been said in many quarters he is.

## Roosevelt And Missionaries

A number of Harvard graduates and under-graduates have formed a missionary society for work in the East. President Roosevelt, of the class of '80, is president of the Advisory Committee of the mission, and among the other members of this committee are President Rawle, of the American Bar Association, Bishop Lawrence, Bishop Root, Professor Moore, of the Harvard Divinity School, Dr. Floyd Tomkins, President Stillman, of the New York City National Bank, and Endicott Peabody, headmaster of Groton School. Formal announcement of the organization of the society was made at Sanders Theatre, on Dec. 2, at a meeting assembled especially to hear former Secretary of State, John W. Foster, speak on "What Shall America Do in the Orient?" The call to religious work in the East, said Secretary Foster, was no less urgent than that to the domain of politics and government. American missionaries had played a most important part in Chinese diplomatic questions and rendered our government invaluable services. Just before Mr. Foster's address, Mr. Ballard, of the class of '05, defined the purposes of the Harvard Mission to be, first the uniting of all Harvard men serving in any foreign field, and under any Christian agency by a closer tie to one another and to the university; second to secure information about their work; third to raise money for the support of Secretary Carter, of the Y. M. C. A. of India, and of Harvard men that hereafter might be sent into the foreign field; fourth to send such men, who would bear the spirit of the university into their work and rejoice to feel themselves sustained by the sentiment of the university community, and finally to foster the spirit of missions within the university itself. An incomplete list of Harvard men now serving in the mission field shows twenty-seven names. It is being corrected and enlarged. The number of those who are choosing the missionary career is rapidly increasing. Four were looking forward to it in 1902, fourteen in 1904. In the former year the Mission Study Class conducted in Brooks House by Professor Moore had eight students; now it has thirty-six.

## Real Importance Of Port Arthur

The persistency with which the Japanese have continued the assaults upon Port Arthur at appalling cost of life, has been ascribed to various causes. Some have stated that the satisfaction of taking the place by assault was one reason. Others have assigned to Port Arthur the pivotal point of the war and its capture meant the end of the war. Other explanations ascribed some significant diplomatic aspect to the capture of the fortress while another explanation has been that the capture or destruction of the Russian fleet sheltered in Port Arthur was essential to continued Japanese success. From a strategic standpoint the latter explanation seems to be the most logical.

There has never been a war waged in the history of the world where the influence of the sea power was so great as it is in the present conflict. It was only by gaining the mastery of the sea that the Japanese were enabled to make war upon Russia. Had Admiral Togo's first attack upon the Russian fleet at Port Arthur at the opening of hostilities been unsuccessful, there would have been no invasion of Korea and Manchuria by the Japanese armies and consequently no war made upon Russia. Japan's entire strategy is based upon this control of the sea, once that is taken from her, Japan's power to injure Russia crumbles in the dust.

While the navy of Japan is quite a compact, well training fighting machine, it would have been sorely outnumbered by the combined Baltic and Port Arthur fleets of Russia. While the morale of the Japanese naval man is unquestionably superior to that of the Russian and the Japanese is a far better sea fighter, still the fortunes of war are so uncertain that the percentage of probable success would lie with the larger fleet, however deficient in good sea fighters it might be. It was with a full appreciation of these conditions that the Japanese redoubled their savage assaults on the Port Arthur fortifications as soon as it became definitely known that the Baltic fleet was likely to start for the Far East. The desire was not so much to take the fortress as it was to insure the destruction of the four big battleships still sheltered in Port Arthur. So vital is the control of the sea to Japan that absolutely no risk of Russia wresting the mastery of the sea from her could be taken. The vessels in Port Arthur had to be destroyed at any cost, and "any cost" always means the frightful sacrifice of human life. The work was well done and with the final torpedoing of the Sevastopol the Japanese nation could feel relief that has not been felt by the Japanese leaders since the Baltic fleet actually got under way with the evident intention of going to the Far East.

So far as the actual capture of the city and the fortress is concerned that is not so important now as it formerly appeared to be. The famous 203 Meter Hill which the Japanese have taken, gives them control of the inner harbor of Port Arthur. Even should Port Arthur not fall until the arrival of the Baltic fleet, the Russian vessels could not use Port Arthur as a base.

It was undoubtedly because of the paramount necessity of destroying the Russian vessels in Port Arthur that Marshal Oyama has not persisted in following Kurapatkin up and effecting the destruction of that army. The necessity of effecting the destruction of the Russian fleet in Port Arthur was more important, evidently than the destruction of Kurapatkin's army. Oyama was compelled by the exigencies of this situation to detach thousands of troops to reinforce the besieging army so that the work of closing

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In on Port Arthur could be effected. The old Marshal was able to drive Kurapatkin away from the objective point, however, and to hold him off while the work of attacking the Russians in Port Arthur progressed. Now that the Russian fleet has been destroyed it is more than probable that Oyama will begin some offensive movement against the Russian forces before Mukden. The most immediate necessity—the destruction of the Port Arthur fleet—has been accomplished so that other important measure—that of striking Kurapatkin—can soon be undertaken. Meanwhile Admiral Togo is preparing to crush the Baltic fleet before it reaches the Far East.

What cheap knaves those tribesmen must be to withdraw from besieging Alcazar on the payment of \$500. But perhaps that is only an instalment, or earnest money.

It looks like there would have to be another "Samar Hike." General Corbin reports the situation in that district critical. When a situation gets "critical" in the Philippines, some benevolent assimilation with Krag-Jorgensons and rapid fire machine guns, is generally considered the best treatment, in military circles.

## HISTORICAL TABLETS.

The proposal which originated in the Hawaiian Historical Society to mark the spots on Hawaiian soil where important events in our history took place, is a good one. It is to be hoped it will meet with the support necessary to carry it out. It is in line with a movement observable in many American cities. The Chicago Historical Society has placed several elaborate memorial tablets and statuary at points where notable events in the early history of that city took place. Chicago can well afford to adopt elaborate memorials, for the places to be marked in Chicago are not very numerous. After the site of old Fort Dearborn had been marked, and the point where occurred the greatest slaughter of the Fort Dearborn massacre, there were not so very many more places that in any historical sense deserved being marked. In and about Boston, on the other hand, the points of greatest interest to the patriot and the student or lover of early American history are numerous. And the work of marking them has been enthusiastically taken up. So that now, the visitor, who will but keep his eyes open cannot go about anywhere in the historical portions of Boston and its environs without seeing the tablets marking places of great interest. There have been many agencies in this work. Patriotic citizens, town boards, city councils, chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, chapters of Sons of the American Revolution, Historical societies, have all had a hand in this pleasing work. The character of the tablets and memorials differ greatly. Of course many of the more important have been marked by statuary monuments, some of them of

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a very high degree of artistic merit. Others have been marked by boulders, and granite slabs with carved inscriptions. But the great majority of the marking is done, and appropriately done by tablets. And in the matter of tablets there is one point that might be worth the attention of those who shall undertake the marking of the points of historic interest in Hawaii. It is this, that while bronze and marble tablets are being placed in position as rapidly as funds can be provided for them, there are scores and scores of tablets which are merely painted boards with the inscription lettered on them. The advantage of these is that they mark the spot which ought to be marked, while identification of it is certain, and they can be replaced by the more durable tablets as fast as money is forthcoming to do it. It might be well in Hawaii to use the money that first becomes available to mark as many spots as possible in this way while identification can still be made, leaving to further effort to secure funds, the means to make these tablets of durable material.

The absence of Admiral Beckley from the dedication of Hooehau Hall at Hilo will make that function like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out.

This is the official day for the celebration of Christmas, but the real celebration was yesterday. So far as there are any public observances today, they are rather perfunctory.

The New Orleans is to land great guns at Midway. But it has been known to blow great guns there before.

Evidently the situation is getting pretty serious inside the Fortress of Port Arthur, when two generals fall in one day, and the Japanese get guns into position to command every part of the city.

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